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LAYS AND  
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C. G. Anderson




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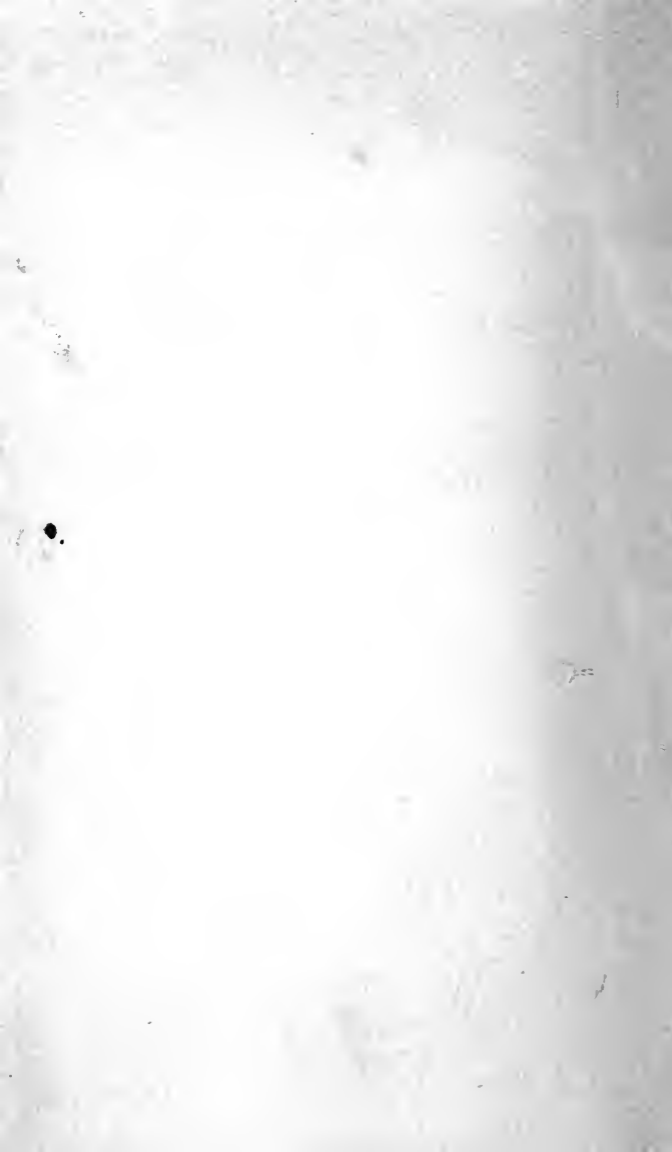
Christian G. Anderson.

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# LAYS AND LEGENDS



# LAYS AND LEGENDS

BY

C. G. ANDERSON

(*Author of 'Thyme and Thistledown' and 'With  
Lute and Viol'*)

LONDON

FRANCIS GRIFFITHS

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## **EASTERN ECHOES**



## Reincarnation

HERE at my feet there resteth Meryt-ra ;  
Swathed in a rose-hued shroud her body lies,  
Gold on her brow, and round each slender  
wrist

Bracelets inwrought with fine-cut amethyst.  
Whither has fled the *Ka* of Meryt-ra,  
Who danced within the Hall of Butterflies ?

Long have I sought it through the vaulted  
gloom

Of chambers decked with painted traceries  
Of bird and lotus, where strange shadows fall  
From crumbling porch or carven capital.  
By what cold daïs, o'er what sculptured  
tomb,

Hovers her spirit now in trembling guise ?

Once more I turn, to see the Nile sweep blue  
Beyond these walls, and there, in sudden wise  
My quest is ended, for a maiden stands  
Holding a *balla* in her outstretched hands.  
The soul of Meryt-ra, re-born anew,  
Looks laughing outwards from her sloe-  
black eyes.

Hussein the camel-sheik hath ridden far  
To fill her pitcher where the clear springs rise  
And rainbow bubbles break about its brim.

O scribe, depart, nor wreak thy wrath on  
him !

What glance for thee, save scorn, hath  
Meryt-ra,

Who danced within the Hall of Butterflies ?

## The Sheikh's Bride

I HAVE closed the gates of the West behind  
me ;

The gates of the East—do they stand ajar ?  
Across their threshold thy hand hath signed  
me,

*Selim, Selim Abenamar.*

Thy summons wakened my soul from  
sleeping ;

I left the land where my kindred are,  
They could not stay me with wrath or  
weeping,—

Nor might they prison by bolt or bar  
The heart held captive within thy keeping,  
*Selim, Selim Abenamar.*

I see thee stand where the palm-tree swayeth  
Beneath the light of a single star ;

Amid the branches the night-wind strayeth  
But one last gleam from the West still  
playeth

Athwart the sheath of thy scimitar.

Thy tethered charger impatient, neigheth ;  
I hear thy call, that my soul obeyeth—

‘Mount ; haste thee, mount !’—though  
 the world gainsayeth,  
*I come, O Selim Abenamar—*

The city sleeps, while the moon sinks dying  
 Behind the tents of the still bazaar ;  
 From out the desert a voice comes crying—  
 The distant howl of the pariah—  
 In long-drawn echo, to mock my sighing,  
*Selim, Selim Abenamar.*

The gates of the East they have closed  
 behind me ;  
 The gates of the West, they stand fast  
 and far.  
 Rent is love’s veil, that no more may  
 blind me.  
 But the chain once forged shall be strong  
 to bind me,  
*Selim, Selim Abenamar.*

## Mahomet's Sentinel

STILL is the camp, and darkened stands the  
bower

Where he whose wrath hath slain the  
Koreishite

Within the vale of Naklah, and whose might  
Once stayed yon moon above the Caabah's  
tower

Sleepeth before the fight.

Alone, beside the ford, I watch and wake.

Shall not the hosts of Abu-Jahl ride fast ?

By token of the dried date-kernels cast,

Have they not learnt the road our feet have  
passed ?

At Beder's stream they halt, their thirst to  
slake,

Ere sounds the trumpet's blast.

What stirs the tamarisk beneath the hill ?

Lurketh there not the glint of steel behind ?

A shadow leaps—my spear its mark shall  
find !

A cry—then silence—but the rising wind,

And the cicala's note that grateth shrill

Mourns him whose eyes are blind.

Spurned by my kinsmen from their roof  
 and race,  
 Have I not paid again the debt I owe  
 Unto the utmost *dinar*?—even so!  
 Once more I look upon my brother's face,  
 First fallen of the foe.

*Mohammed Ibn Abdallah* ! now doth ring  
 E'en to their ranks our war-cry menacing.  
*Allah ill 'Allah* !—now shalt thou arise,  
 O Prophet, Lord and Seer, and red dust fling,  
 Whirled by the blast athwart the rending  
 skies,  
 Whence to our aid the hosts of heaven  
 shall speed.

*Haizum ! Haizum !* what rein may curb that  
 steed  
 Whose hoofs strike flame, before whose  
 nostrils' breath  
 Their squadrons scatter like the desert sand?  
 Behind his track who rides the ways of death  
 We press exultant, mindful of his word—  
 'The gates of Paradise shall open stand,  
 When o'er them rests the shadow of the  
 sword !'

## The Prophecy of Queen Akaluka

(*Egypt—Ethiopian Dynasty, 748-664 B.C.*)

THE Queen uprose from the royal feast,  
And she lifted the bow on high ;  
To South and North, and to West and East  
Four arrows sped, from the string released.  
Then spake she in prophecy :—  
‘Taharqa, my son, at thy throne’s right hand  
Now Egypt crowns thee, thou bidd’st me stand.  
By yon shaft’s token, each goodly land  
Before thee shall captive lie.

‘The East shall fashion thee vessels wrought  
In ebon and juniper ;  
White carven pillars to grace thy court,  
And apes and leopards therein to sport  
Thy galleons shall claim of her.  
And I will deck me in raiment bright,  
With chains of jasper and malachite,  
And pigeons’ plumes be my couch by night  
Made sweet with the scent of myrrh.

‘The North shall yield thee the spoils of war ;  
Her cohorts shall flee in dread  
Before the sweep of thy scimitar,  
Till e’en the cities of proud Shinar  
Shall quake at thy legions’ tread.

And I will ride, while the shouting swells  
 'Mid sound of sistrum and clash of bells,  
 With princes clanking in manacles  
 Behind me in triumph led.

'The West shall grant thee a crown of peace ;  
 The harvest of field and vine  
 Her sons shall bear thee in rich increase,  
 With oil of *ani*, and white rams' fleece,  
 And cassia and mer-wood fine,  
 And I will greet them with song and mirth,  
 For a righteous king doth behold more  
     worth  
 In the ploughshare's spoil than the red  
     sword's dearth,  
 And brighter than blood runs wine.

'But the gift of the South shall be most  
     to thee,  
 For the South shall send thee a bride,  
 From a Theban palace ariseth she  
 Whose eyes more dark than the sloe shall be,  
 Her lips by no henna dyed.  
 And I will go hence, in an hour grown less  
 Than her fleetest smile, or her lightest tress,  
 And the end of my days shall be bitterness  
 And dust of a shattered pride !'

## The Song of Lalla Tahara

WHERE thou hast passed between the trees,  
*Haroun, Haroun,*  
 What hast thou left me?—even these,  
 One rose of June  
 Crushed by the hand that let it fall  
 The echo of a flute's faint call,  
 Thy shadow brooding over all—  
*Haroun, Haroun.*

While the mute fountain tranquil lies,  
*Haroun, Haroun,*  
 Thine image from the depths doth rise,  
 Yet stirreth soon  
 Thy sudden laughter through its springs,  
 Whereto mine own responsive rings  
 With all unseemly echoings,  
*Haroun, Haroun.*

Amid the Soko's close thronged space,  
*Haroun, Haroun.*  
 I seek the semblance of thy face,  
 And when at noon  
 The fakir sounds the tom-tom's beat,  
 I follow down the sun-scorched street,  
 For to one measure pace his feet,  
*Haroun, Haroun.*

From the mosque roof the call to prayer  
*(Haroun, Haroun,)*

Drones forth ; I may not enter there,  
 Nor crave such boon,  
 Yet, hidden in its portal's shade,  
 May not my burning steps be stayed,  
 Awhile to linger, unafraid ?

*Haroun, Haroun.*

Ash-white against the sunset's flame,  
*Haroun, Haroun,*  
 The wheeling pigeons call thy name  
 With ceaseless croon ;  
 Would I might choke them dumb, ere yet  
 They light on yonder minaret !  
 Would for an hour I might forget,  
*Haroun, Haroun !*

Curved like thy sheathless scimitar,  
*Haroun, Haroun,*  
 Yon moon's keen crescent cleaves the bar  
 Of sleep or swoon,  
 And bids me rise from dreams of death,  
 While, borne upon the desert's breath,  
 I hear thy steed that gallopeth,  
*Haroun, Haroun.*

Thy lips their tale shall likewise tell,  
*Haroun, Haroun,*  
 E'en as the throbbing drum doth swell  
 The guimbry's tune.

As pants the thirsting earth for rain,  
 For sight of thee mine eyes are fain,  
 And surely thou shalt come again,

*Haroun, Haroun.*

Yea ! for an hour we twain shall meet,

*Haroun, Haroun,*

Where twines the jasmine, silver-sweet  
 Beneath the moon :—

Then will I slay thee secretly,  
 In that I would my soul may be  
 No more thus subject unto thee,

*Haroun, Haroun !*

## The Farewell of Abd-el-Zamil

WE who have watched the swift stray  
meteors falling

Over the roof-tops where the moon dips low,  
Shall we not hear again the song that dieth  
When from the mosque the sleepless Imam  
crieth ?

Deaf grows thine ear ; one woman's clear  
voice calling

Bids thee return, that erstwhile bade thee go.

We who have spurred o'er Hasa's plain  
together,

Strong as the sea, our course flecked white  
with foam,

Say, shall the fleet gazelle await our slaying ?  
Bideth the *kata's* flight for thy delaying ?

Slack falls thy rein ; a hand hath grasped  
its tether,

Turning thee westward, as the tide turns  
home.

We who have dreamed the dreams that are  
not spoken,

Born of the smoke, that snake-like coil and  
cling,

Languid with scent of nard and opium  
 blending,  
 May not our souls lie lost in peace unending ?  
 Faint fades the spell a dream of old hath  
 broken,  
 Whence thou shalt waken, still remembering.

Thou shalt go hence, and on thy lips be  
 laughter,—  
 Scorn of the years that manhood's garb have  
 wrought,  
 Out from the threads of youth's light vesture  
 woven,  
 Yet shall their woof endure, till this be  
 proven—  
 Shall not the East arise and follow after,  
 Strongest at last to claim what she hath  
 sought ?

*Shall not the rusted chain at length be riven ?*  
*Standeth the tree whose roots are cleft in twain ?*  
 Dim are mine eyes, yet still have they  
 beholden  
 Yonder the Gate of Promise shining golden.  
 Ere yet my bones unto the dust be given,  
 Haply thy feet shall stir it once again !

## The Requital of Jerioth

O PRIEST of Baal,  
 Who servest in the shadow of the grove,  
 Lies there no fairer way before thy feet?  
 Doth not the henna flower bear scent more  
     sweet  
 Than oil of incense, and the turtle-dove  
 With song prevail?

Yea, even thou  
 Hast heard her note; what need is thine of  
     plea?  
 Dost thou but seek me at the temple gate  
 To din mine ears with babble of vain prate?  
 Go hence again; what art thou unto me—  
 What art thou now?

No more arrayed  
 In priestly garb of white-robed holiness,  
 Lit by the crescent of a new-horned moon,  
 But pale and shrunk, thou creepest now at  
     noon;  
 I deemed thee more than man, but thou art  
     less  
 Who thus obeyed.

Yet turn not twice  
To Baal or Ashtoreth, to purge thy shame  
With blood of slaughtered bullocks there  
    besprent,  
Or with thy tears o'erflowing in lament,  
Which shall but further quench the sunken  
    flame  
Of sacrifice.

Seek thou elsewhere  
A stronger God than these thou didst forsake ;  
Yet is it meet that they should still be mine—  
Yea ! I will kneel before them at the shrine  
I bade thee scorn, so may I haply make  
Atonement there.

## The Pilgrimage of Assad

‘ FAIN for mine evil deeds would I atone  
Before my spirit hence its flight shall take ! ’  
Thus, bowed with toil and years, Assad  
made moan.

From shrouded skies, the voice of Brahmah  
spake—

‘ Seek thou the Ganges’ stream, and bathe  
therein ;

So shall thy soul be purified from sin.’

He rose, and like one wandering in a dream  
Down the parched valley fared ; a brook  
he spied.

Straightway he plunged therein. ‘ O sacred  
stream,

Render me free from taint of earth ! ’ he cried.  
But as to mount the farther shore he strove,  
A herdsman’s laughter mocked him from  
above.

‘ O fool ! ’ he railed, ‘ what dotard’s prank  
is thine

To wallow on yon banks beslimed with weed,  
And muddied by the trampling of the kine  
That hither I at noon for pasture lead ?

No hallowed waters these, to cleanse from  
stain

Body or soul ; go ! get thee home again !'

'Have I then failed ?' Assad sighed wearily,  
And bent his steps not homeward, but afar  
Through plain and jungle. Oft he thought  
to see

Revealed to him his longed for Avatar ;  
But each time learned the waters that he  
sought

Lay still beyond, their miracle unwrought.

Till at the last, one close of day he came  
To where a lordly river seaward rolled,  
Studded with sails like jewels 'neath the flame  
Of skies that shone with amethyst and gold—  
And by whose brink, 'mid perfumed branches  
set,

Rose dome of mosque and spire of minaret.

But as to gain the margin he essayed,  
A shadow rose between him and the sun ;  
'Depart, oh death ! a little space !' he prayed  
'Claim me not now, until my goal be won !'  
Yet vain his anguish ; on that shining shore  
Strength failed him, and he sank to rise no more.

The scent of champak and of tamarind  
Grew faint and far ; in mist before his eyes  
Earth faded like a scene long left behind.

But clear a mystic summons called ' Arise !  
 Five times the sacred river o'er thee passed ;  
 Enter thou in unto my peace at last ! '

Trembling he cried—' O Brahmah, lord  
 most dread

Rend me with wrath, but not with mockery !  
 Five times in error were my footsteps led  
 To sullied streams not hallowed unto thee.  
 Curséd am I, beholding Truth too late ! '  
 Then spake the god to him compassionate—

' Great was thy faith ; upon thee is bestowed  
 The pardon thou hast sorely toiled to win,  
 In thine own heart the healing waters flowed  
 Stronger than earthly tide to cleanse thy sin.  
 Sorrow no more ; Nirvâna crowns thy quest ;  
 Where all streams seek their bourne, find  
 thou thy rest ! '

## The Sultana's Wraith

(The massacre of the Abencerrages, indirectly resulting in the downfall of Granada, is said to have been inspired by the jealousy of Bobadil, to whom courtiers reported that the Sultana had flung a spray of oleander at the feet of the leader Albin-Hamad. The allusion in the last verse refers to the sculptured Hand and Key on the Gate of Justice. The prophecy runs that when this Hand shall grasp this Key, the walls of the Alhambra will be shattered, and the glory of Spain will depart.)

THROUGH thy boughs one sunbeam splendid,  
*Linderaja, Linderaja,*  
 Like a cleaving sword descended  
 O'er the path whereon strode he—  
 Albin-Hamad, lord most vaunted  
 'Mid the Moslem host undaunted  
 That Granada's walls defended.  
*Linderaja, woe is me !*

There alone I watched him wander,  
*Linderaja, Linderaja,*  
 And one spray of oleander,  
 Half in jest, half heedlessly,  
 At his feet I flung unbidden,  
 Recking not of glances hidden—  
 Evil tongues that whispered slander.  
*Linderaja, woe is me !*

By no flaming love's mad token

*(Linderaja, Linderaja)*

Hath your doom been sealed and spoken,

Flower of Islam's chivalry !

And a kingdom's glory shattered

Like the crimson petals scattered

From one blossom lightly broken ;

*Linderaja, woe is me !*

Till yon crescent's fiery dawning,

*Linderaja, Linderaja,*

Marks the hour of wrath and warning

When the Hand shall grasp the Key,

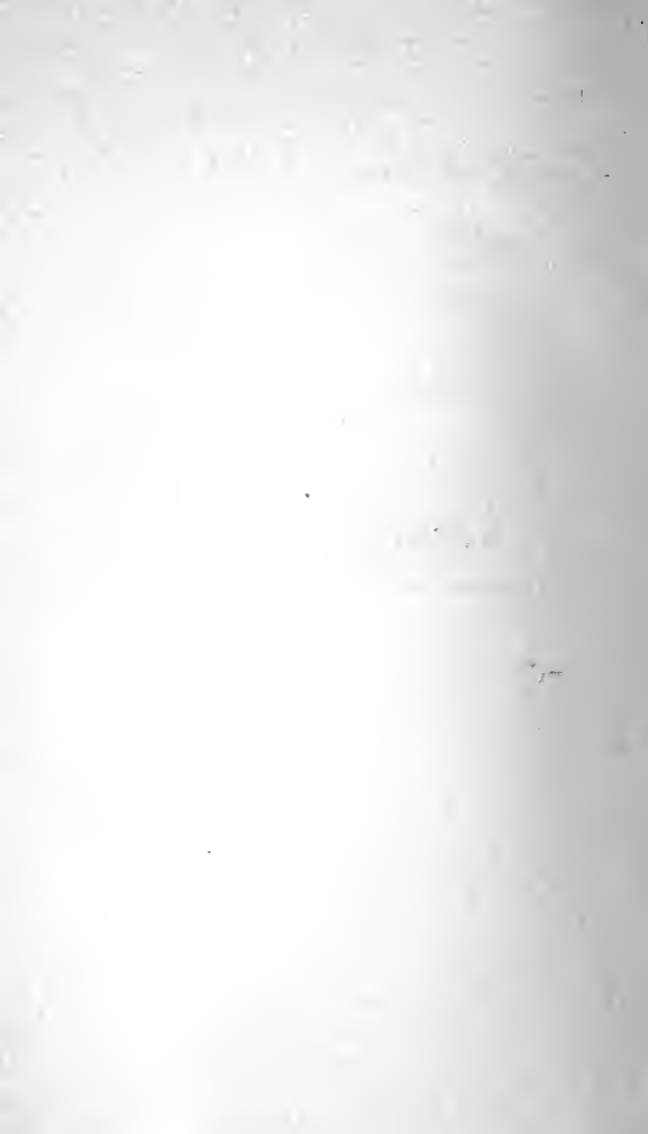
Till these walls to dust be riven,

Must my soul abide unshriven

In their shade, nor cease from mourning

*Linderaja, woe is me !*

## **VARIED VERSES**



## The King's Largesse

(Robert the Pious. France, A.D. 996-1031.)

'ALL hail ! O King whose majesty  
We greet with flowers, and guard with steel,  
While, through our clamour breaks the cry—  
"Largesse ! Largesse !"—their plea who  
kneel

With miser fingers forward thrust  
To seize the ducats as they meet  
In golden rain the trampled dust  
Spurned by thy palfrey's restive feet.

They grasp their fill ; their lean lips laugh—  
'See how yon wittol gaping stands !'  
Yet shall the gain be mine, the chaff  
Be theirs who grope with eager hands,  
For I have followed in the train  
Of those who touched thy mantle's hem  
Nor have mine eyes beheld in vain  
The splendour of thy diadem.

The harp attuned to swell thy praise,  
The sword made keen thy foes to smite,  
The homage that exalts my days—  
Though such be worthless in thy sight

Whose realm shall reach the utmost earth,  
 Yet these thy gifts I laud and sing ;  
 My soul, thus quickened into birth,  
 Doth render thanks to thee, my King ! ’

*Frail scion of a regal line  
 Unlearned in all that thou hast taught  
 Grant him the gifts that are not thine,  
 But, at thy peril, count them naught !  
 While trumpets twain, from out thy tower  
 Challenge and triumph vaunt and prove,  
 The first proclaims thy love of power,  
 The last, thy people’s power of love.*

## Recuerdo

‘COME, let us seek the old and happy  
country ;  
Far have I roved, yet found no land so fair ;  
Weary am I of winds that waft me vagrant,  
Let us return to yonder valleys fragrant,  
Where once we loved, for peace shall find  
us there.’

‘Nay ! for my ship hath long lain moored  
in haven ;  
Green weed and grey have gathered round  
her prow,  
Wrack of the tides that ebbd to there  
forsake her,  
Rusted her keel, unmeet for shoal or  
breaker ;  
Strive not, I pray, to steer her seaward now.’

‘Have you not seen the sunlight o’er the  
forest ?  
Do you not hear the birds and breezes call ?’  
‘Yea, but I dread the rising mist that  
showeth  
Dim through the leaves, where autumn’s  
splendour gloweth ;  
Take me not near, lest at a touch they fall.’

‘Have you no heed for all we vowed afore-  
time ?

Are they forgot,—the ways wherein we met ?’

‘You have roamed long, o’er land and ocean  
ranging,

But in my sight yon coast hath stood  
unchanging,

Ask me then not, my friend, if *I* forget !

‘Let it remain a golden shore whose promise  
Dreams shall fulfil, nor brave the seas  
between,

Since all too soon October’s rose must  
wither,

Better our hearts alone should journey  
thither,

Whispering still—“Perchance it might have  
been !”’

## The Toll

WHEREWITH shall Springtide pay,  
 When Time's grey gateway, all too long  
     concealed  
 By briar and blossom, stands at last revealed ?  
 Tears such as end perchance an April day  
 She needs must yield.

What toll hath Summer borne ?  
 The crimson petals of a rose let fall,  
 Late gathered from her scattered festival.  
 Her lips smile triumph, but her heart shall  
     mourn  
 Her broken thrall.

When Autumn comes, arrayed  
 In mist-veiled vesture, wrought and seamed  
     with gold,  
 Shall not her chilly fingers loose their hold,  
 And nathless dole reluctant tribute paid  
 For days all told ?

Bereft doth winter creep ;  
 What can be claimed of her, save memory ?  
 Yet shall her gift not unrequited lie ;  
 Her feet alone may find the path where sleep  
 Shall still her sigh.

## From One Generation . . . .

AROUND me the shadow of pines falleth  
quiet ;

No breath breaks their shelter, yet nathless  
I see

The quiver that stirs through the sapling,  
and showeth

The strength of the storm as it overhead  
bloweth.

Say—thou who hast followed the path of  
its riot,

What cry, O my son, hath it borne unto  
thee ?

It calleth thee hence, but to me may be  
spoken

No word of the summons which peals from  
the height,

For slowly the growth of the woodlands  
hath thickened

To deaden such echoes ; mine ears are not  
quicken'd,

And, viewed through the gap that thy foot-  
steps have broken,

The hills thou wouldst scale seem but clouds  
to my sight.

Long have I ploughed, that thy limbs might  
     know leisure,  
 Yet e'en by such toil, of itself rendered  
     vain,  
 This heritage also bequeathed to thy  
     keeping—  
 The pride which rejecteth the grain of my  
     reaping—  
 The scorn of thy youth, that would scatter  
     its treasure  
 Like chaff to the winds—till they sow it  
     again.

Go forth, and go freely !—for silence is fitter  
 Than counsel which irks thee, but shall not  
     prevail.  
 Nay ! feign not regret, lest thy words should  
     ring hollow ;  
 This only I charge thee—from one who  
     shall follow,  
 Withhold not this boon, though the granting  
     be bitter—  
 The right to achieve—and the freedom to  
     fail.

When he thou hast reared in the shade of  
     thy rafter  
 The slant of its beam hath in stature out-  
     grown,  
 When the speech of thy sorrow is sport for  
     his railing,

And the work of thy hands in his sight  
unavailing,  
Thus then shalt thou pay, as he leaves thee  
with laughter,  
The price of the gift thou hast claimed for  
thine own.

## Interlude

‘LADY, in your lonely hours,  
 Doth yon breeze that stirs the flowers  
 Unto you no tidings tell ?  
 Breathes it naught of him who lingers  
 Where the eglantine’s frail fingers  
 Bend and beckon from the towers  
 Of the Villa Silvabelle ?’

‘If the palm whose roots are planted  
 Far beyond these walls enchanted  
 Feel a zephyr’s breath impel  
 To and fro some frond that strayeth  
 O’er their confines—what gainsayeth ?  
 By no storm-wind’s echo haunted  
 Stand the groves of Silvabelle.

‘What of her who steps sedately  
 Underneath the cedars stately ?  
 Ask you if I scorn her spell ?  
 I will bid him give her greeting,  
 While she sorrows that our meeting  
 Still delayeth, since so greatly  
 Winds the road to Silvabelle.

‘What of these, the gift she sendeth—  
 Roses whose each petal blendeth  
 Tint of pearl and pink sea-shell ?

While he tarries, I will wear them,  
Then, as leaf from leaf I tear them,  
Small yet sharp, the thorn that rendeth  
Greets me thence—from Silvabelle.

‘ Though he yield me love’s full measure ;  
Naught she taketh from its treasure  
(Ask no more—I know it well).  
Yet the hours make weary whiling,  
And my lips grow stiff with smiling,  
While her laughter lights his leisure  
At the Villa Silvabelle.’

## Without are Dogs . . . .?

BEYOND a graveyard's measure,  
 By the far wall lies  
 One little plot ye treasure  
 Till your star shall rise.  
 O ye whose last cold kennel  
 Gleams grey 'mid dock and fennel,  
 Have you never part nor pleasure  
 In our Paradise ?

Are ye lost, beyond our praying,  
 Whom we still hold dear ?  
 Do your voices echo, baying  
 Or made shrill with fear ?  
 From the Saint who guards yon city  
 Ye may beg in vain for pity ;  
 To the East his thoughts are straying,  
 And he will not hear.

So seek him not, but rather  
 By the western gate  
 Where your friends the children gather,  
 It were best to wait ;  
 Through the cloud-fringed curtains shining,  
 Should they haply hear you whining  
 And should bid you follow farther,  
 Then how blest your fate !

Though ye greet us, tail a-quiver,  
With too bold a paw,  
That hath splashed the crystal river  
O'er the golden floor,  
Yet the prayer to us forbidden  
On their lips shall not be chidden—  
That ye plead without, and shiver  
In the cold no more.

## Butterflies

O'ER the hillside blithely playing,  
 Butterflies, butterflies,  
 Winging white before mine eyes,  
 Fain would I arrest your straying—  
 Bid you linger with me yet—  
 But by none such idle wooing  
 Can I grasp you ; he who tries  
 Needs must own, for swift pursuing,  
 Nimble foot and crafty net.

Fitful dreams and fleeting fancies,  
 Butterflies, butterflies,  
 Roving neath the southern skies,  
 Drifting on a breeze that dances,  
 Who can stay you as you pass ?  
 He alone who, ease foregoing,  
 Striveth long, nor toil denies.  
 Shall such spoil be worth the showing  
 When the sunlight quits the grass ?

Hark ! I hear a wafted warning,  
 Butterflies, butterflies,  
 ' Let us roam in wanton guise,  
 Though we see no morrow's dawning  
 And shall leave no trace behind.  
 Let thy thoughts take flight unspoken ;  
 Dreams made captive change to sighs  
 When their wings fall limp and broken  
 In a net of words entwined ! '

## The Boring of the Well

O SOUL, what echoes have stirred thy  
sleeping?

The ring of steel on resisting stone—  
The heavy fall of the soft soil heaping,  
O'er bed and border and pathway thrown.  
The tulips' banners once bravely flaunted,  
Lie crushed and tattered, yet still undaunted  
The leafless stem of the rose stands keeping  
The long grey vigil of dawn alone.

Slowly, slowly, the earth unwilling  
Doth yield her heart to the questing spade  
That strikes yet deeper, nor spares the killing  
Of weed or worm by its ruthless blade,  
Till it reach the bourne that awaits its prising,  
Where the hidden springs, from the depths  
arising,  
Thence flow and eddy, the dark void filling,  
And heal the scars that the tool hath made.

And now the task of the spade is over—  
The work complete that was wrought and  
planned—  
Go hide it well, with a stone to cover  
That none may move with a heedless hand

Ere the lichen's gold and the green moss  
mingle

Till slag and soil seem but one and single,  
While the cloud-plumed wings of the May  
winds hover,

And the iris wakes, by their pinions fanned.

Yet by the fence where the garden endeth  
The pump stands plain, that when days are  
dry,

Each one who forth from the village wendeth  
With pail or pitcher, may pause thereby,  
Nor question whence is the water's flowing  
He seeks to quicken his spring-tide's sowing,  
Or raise the stalk of a flower that bendeth  
Athirst and frail 'neath a rainless sky.

## Belated

A GARLAND I gathered for thee,  
Thy brow to adorn—  
White flower of the cinnamon tree,  
Green leaf of the bay—  
And, seeking, I stayed not to hear  
Thy lingering footfall pass near,  
Nor recked I of stone or of thorn  
On thy way.

The blossoms I sought with long toil  
To thee have I borne,  
But weary wert thou for such spoil ;  
Thou hast thrust them aside,  
Thus sighing—‘ Nay, bring me not now  
A wreath all too bright for my brow,  
For noon may not grant what the morn  
Hath denied ! ’

## L'Asile de Notre Dame

WHAT though her lips be silent to thine ear  
Whose heedless steps ring hollow round her  
shrine?

May not their carven curve yet part to plead  
For those who crave her aid to intercede? ·  
Shall not such listening hearts a whisper hear  
Unheard by thine?

What though her eyes be tearless to thy  
sight—

Blind glass reflecting but the tinsel's sheen  
That decks her robe?—shall they who  
seamed each fold

With love and labour, in their depths behold  
No softer radiance of transcendent light  
By thee unseen?

Not unto thee her marvels may be wrought;  
Not thine the wounds her hand hath power  
to heal;

Since not divine, but woman still is she  
Whose feet have climbed the brow of  
Calvary;

What favour shall she deign to grant,  
unsought,  
What grace reveal?

How may she answer thee, O wayfarer,  
 Who hast no word of praise or plea to tell?  
 Waits she not even as a woman waits,  
 Tending the poor that gather round her gates,  
 Yet unto him who asketh naught of her  
 Implacable?

Beholding heaven with unseeing eyes,  
 And treading earth with unresponsive feet,  
 Depart thou hence, lest scorn beget thee scorn;  
 Vest with the woof of dreams thy soul out-  
     worn,  
 But here, where faith stands shrined, thy  
     fantasies  
 Are all unmeet.

## The Third Trophy

THREE maidens went a-maying,  
 Blithely straying,  
 With lightsome laughter playing  
 O'er mound and meadow green  
 And through the palm-fringed thicket,  
 Until they reached the wicket  
 And paused thereby, delaying  
 Where many paths are seen.

One goeth by the highway,  
 One a by-way—  
 'Along yon dusty dry way,'  
 Quoth she, 'no hedgerows shine.'  
 And one the river seeketh;  
 Thus each to other speaketh—  
 'My way shall not be thy way,  
 My wreath be like to thine!'

They met, when skies were raining,  
 Daylight waning;  
 But stem and thorn remaining  
 One bore, while one aside  
 Had flung her chaplet wholly,  
 And when the last came slowly—  
 'She too shall walk complaining—  
 What bringest thou?'—they cried.

‘ Beyond my reach, defying  
All my trying,  
Ungathered and undying  
Still blooms my branch of May ;  
Yet thence a spray of myrtle  
I carry in my kirtle,  
Whose green leaves ease my sighing  
When all the world is grey ! ’

## Glamour

FAIR western land, wherefrom we sailed  
Across yon opal-tinted sea,  
Thy shadowed shore now standeth veiled  
In purple garb of mystery,  
Yet day hath left her gift for thee—  
A coronal of jewels wrought,  
With the spent gold of sunlight bought.

O realm of yester-years that lies  
Half dim, half lit, we thus behold  
Thy lustrous peaks resplendent rise,  
Thy capes and headlands flecked with gold,  
But o'er thy plain the mist hath rolled,  
And one by one the lights grow less  
'Mid shadows of forgetfulness.

E'en though our feet that trod thy ways  
Knew not yon glory o'er thy height  
Of amber and of chrysoprase,  
We reck not now, while, swift in flight,  
Come dreams, like sea-birds winging white,  
And on their pinions still doth rest  
The self-same light that crowns each crest.

## Solace

Now that once more I look upon his face,  
 Speak not of anger that hath ceased to burn.  
 May I not sorrow for a little space  
 In this last hour which bringeth his return ?

I who have borne through many weary years  
 The burden of his shame, uncomforted,  
 Where may I check the flowing of such tears  
 As fall for him, my son, who lieth dead ?

Beside no mountain torrents, flashing down  
 O'er crag and boulder, may I find relief ;  
 Their swirl and eddy shall not serve to drown  
 The bitter waters of a deeper grief.

Amid no starry solitudes I seek  
 The peace and steadfast courage of the night ;  
 Such strength shall surely scorn his spirit  
     weak  
 That failed and faltered ere it gained the  
     height.

Nor yet where larch and pine stand sentinel  
 To guard the rock-hewn path that winds  
     below—

Not there, where last I waved to him  
 farewell,  
 So long ago—so very long ago !

But where the dancing shadows fleck the  
 street  
 Beneath the lilacs where the children play,  
 I listen for the echo of his feet  
 Set free from school—methinks but yester-  
 day.

And once again I hear his voice ring high  
 In sudden laughter, clear through all the rest,  
 While o'er them flits a yellow butterfly,  
 And he springs foremost in the fruitless quest.

Say, shall it harm them if they bring me now  
 The bluebells gathered in the woodland ways,  
 To weave a wreath for him, about whose  
 brow  
 No laurel twines, nor crown of victor's bays ?

Yea ! these shall be their gift, whose feet  
 shall pass  
 In after days unheeding ; so may he  
 Rest unrebuked, while o'er the rain-washed  
 grass  
 The little breezes blow to comfort me.

## Little Brown Demon

A LITTLE brown demon so softly crept  
Where the litter of puppies dwell ;  
He pinched their ears, and no more they  
slept—

One pull the cloth from the table swept,  
And the pitcher in fragments fell.  
Ah! dire mishap!—yet each tongue doth lap  
The milk as it gushes down.  
We cry alack ! for an imp so black,  
But in truth he is only brown.

The little brown demon, he sat a-curl  
On the bench of the village school ;  
One word he whispered to boy and girl,  
And schemes of frolic make each brain  
whirl,  
Forgetful of desk and stool.  
Though we might think him as black as ink  
On seeing the master's frown,  
A truant beam through the pane doth gleam  
To shine on his coat of brown.

That little brown demon, though years glide  
by,  
While puppy is changed to hound,

And boy to man, he shall still lurk nigh  
To tempt our hearts with a whisper sly,  
As long as the world spins round.  
Yet though we quail at his horns and tail  
And the fame of his far renown,  
We still shall trust that, if meet we must,  
We'll find him, not black, but brown !

## Beyond

BEYOND youth's fragrant mead, who journeys  
 slow,  
 Seeking, athirst beneath a scorching sky,  
 Some hidden pool, but finds its springs no less  
 Salt with the brine of old-time bitterness  
 Than are those tears, through which shall  
 he descry  
 His mirrored image from the depths below  
 Rise up in mockery.

Beyond the waste of sorrow who doth fare,  
 Wherein his eyes behold no comrade's face,  
 Nor guiding track athwart the wind-swept  
 sand,  
 But, when he sees the strong hills steadfast  
 stand,  
 Learneth at last that unto no new place  
 He cometh, for the firmer ground shall bear  
 Another footprint's trace.

Beyond yon heights—who would that region  
 tread  
 Must ford alone, beset by hazard sore,  
 The swirling stream that surges, deep and wide,  
 Beneath their range, but he who stems its tide—  
 Shall he not grasp their hands who crossed  
 before,  
 Whom, seeing not, he yet hath followed  
 Unto the further shore?

## Printanière

I FARED afar to seek the Spring,  
 Ere yet her feet drew nigh ;  
 Within my soul her summons stirred  
 Before the cuckoo's note was heard.  
 I might not bide her tarrying  
 Beneath a Northern sky.

I wooed her where the wild rose twined  
 Above our sunlit path,  
 Till once at noon, in sudden dread,  
 I looked, and lo ! she thence had fled.  
 The whisper of a wearied wind  
 Bore word of aftermath—

‘ Dry droops the grass ; along yon shore  
 All vainly were she sought.  
 Go hence, before thine eyes behold  
 The scorched mimosa's scattered gold  
 Fall down in dust, wherewith no store  
 Of gladness may be bought.’

Not in such wise, O heart of mine,  
 Might Spring beside thee stay,  
 Who as a maiden dallieth,  
 Yet hears not love amid the breath  
 Of airs which move not palm or pine  
 That fringe a halcyon bay.

Where sterner blasts around thee rise,  
And rain-swept hills stretch bare,  
Wait thou the coming of her feet,  
Not wholly strange, but yet more sweet,  
With softer radiance in her eyes—  
New flowers to deck her hair.

## Reunion

BORNE on the restless tide that seaward flows  
 I fled from haven, seeking through such  
     flight  
 To breathe the rapture of the star-crowned  
     height,  
 And crush her crimson secret from the rose,  
 For all save this seemed worthless in my  
     sight.

What is the end of all my wayfaring ?  
 To list at eve unto the bittern's cry—  
 An empty echo through the darkening sky,  
 Wherein the stars reveal me no new thing,  
 Ere dawn, bereft of promise, draweth nigh ?

Nay ! but to lift mine eyes at noon, and see  
 Athwart the sunlight on the river's plain  
 The shadow of your presence fall again ;  
 Above the waters lapping wearily,  
 To hear your voice that calls—not now in  
     vain !

Wherefore, what need of further speech or  
     song ?  
 Too long my plaint hath vexed the Southern  
     skies,  
 But now once more in gladness I arise  
 To seek the North ; so may my feet be  
     strong  
 Upon our road that yet untrodden lies.

## Envoi

O ROSES, torn untimely from the tree,  
 How many of your blooms lie crushed and  
     killed,  
 Ere yet yon slender crystal flask may be  
 With attar filled !

O dreams that wing from out the void,  
     unsought,  
 How myriad and how fugitive ye throng,  
 Before one vagrant fantasy be caught  
 And caged in song !

Bewail not, blossoms, your brief hour of  
     pride,  
 Whose essence shall endure when June is  
     past,  
 Nor strive to break song's snare, ye dreams  
     that bide  
 Of all, the last.

## **VERSES FOR RECITATION**



## The Caravacca Cross

(Metal crosses which have been blessed in the chapel at Caravacca are greatly treasured in certain parts of Spain. It is believed that in token of Divine support and protection each of these Crosses will miraculously open when trouble or great danger approaches its possessor.)

HE heard a rousing summons ; to his  
fevered soul it spake—

‘ *Ramón, Ramón Alvarez !*

Waste not thy days in sorrow for a faithless  
woman’s sake.

Thy promised bride is stolen by thy brother’s  
treachery ;

She is his wife, and thou art fooled ; reproach  
and rage are vain.

Go hence ! Thy manhood bids thee rise and  
strike a blow for Spain,

Where foes assail her flag, in Cuba’s isle  
beyond the sea.’

So he rode away at dawn from Caravacca.

A league he scarce had ridden, when his  
mother spoke his name—

‘ *Ramón ! ay, hijo mio !* ’

Bowed down with toil and care, unto her  
*venta* door she came.

‘One gift,’ she cried, ‘at parting, let your  
mother’s hand bestow—

The cross the priest hath blessed, that is  
fashioned thus in twain,

Though the halves be nailed together, till  
they seem but one again—

I charge you, wear and guard it when you  
face your country’s foe,

While my prayers arise for you from  
Caravacca.

‘In your hour of darkest peril, in your time of  
sternest need,

*Ramón, ah caro mio,*

If your soul be purged from tremor, and  
your heart be pure indeed,

A sign shall be vouchsafed you, and a miracle  
revealed ;

These nails will part asunder, till the cross  
be opened wide,

In token that a blessing shall descend and  
shall abide.

Our Saints shall keep their vigil o’er the  
blazing battlefield,

As o’er the peaceful shrine of Caravacca.’

‘Scant faith have I in miracle, in Saint or  
priestly spell,

*Madre, O madre mia !*

Yet, if it brings you solace, I will guard  
your gift right well.’

So spake he, and before her on the path he  
bent to kneel,

While she tied the silken cord that hung the  
cross upon his breast.

‘At least for me,’ said he, ‘it shall a truer  
token rest

Than the rose whose leaves I scattered with  
a curse beneath my heel—

Her gift who drives me forth from Caravacca.’

He scarce had gained the stirrup, when there  
rose another call—

*‘Ramón, Ramón Alvarez!’*

Beneath the oleanders that drooped o’er a  
garden wall

A quick ear caught his coming, and Carlota  
checked her song.

‘Will you speak no word of parting, even  
now, to me?’ she cried.

He saw his brother Pablo standing silent by  
her side,

And he gave no sign nor answer, as he  
spurred his mule along

The mountain track that led from Caravacca.

‘The Saints may work their miracles, but  
such are not for me,

*Ramón, Ramón Alvarez!’*

So mused he, when the war was done, and  
came the hard decree

That Cuba’s soil must yield unto a foreign  
mastery.

‘ My mother’s cross stays cold and closed ;  
in vain I solace crave.

Not mine the pride of conquest, nor for me  
a soldier’s grave.’

And years fled on, until at last, beneath a  
midnight sky,

He rode again the path to Caravacca.

A league the town lay distant, when a well-  
known voice rang shrill—

‘ *Aquí ! O viajero !* ’

Once more Carlota called him from the  
garden on the hill.

She ran and seized his bridle, and her eyes  
were wild with fear.

‘ My husband lies sore stricken by a falling  
tree-trunk’s blow

That spent its weight upon him while he  
tilled the ground below.

He is in peril ; I must stay to watch beside  
him here—

O ride and bring me aid from Caravacca ! ’

He turned his face towards her ; from her  
lips there broke a cry—

‘ *Ramón ! Ramón Alvarez !*

I knew you not, when thus I prayed your  
help in charity.

Ah ! cursed the hour that brings you back  
to mock me in my need !

No stranger could have failed me now, yet  
 you will not forgive ;  
 The power is yours to save him—but you  
 would not have him live !  
 Revenge is here at last—begone !—but this  
 I bid you heed—  
 Return no more, thus shamed, to Caravacca !'

A moment stood he silent, with a frown  
 upon his brow.

' *Carlota, ah ! Carlota,*  
 Your words are hard, but time is short for  
 speech between us now.  
 An act shall be my answer ; for none other  
 can I stay !'  
 He urged his mule to hasten, while from  
 out the shrouded skies  
 He heard the sullen murmur of a coming  
 storm arise,  
 And a flash of lightning quivered like a  
 sword, to point the way  
 Towards the distant walls of Caravacca.

. . . . .

' Whence ride you hither through the  
 tempest's wrath this fearsome night,  
*Ramón, Ramón Alvarez ?*  
 Like some wild spectre fleeing from a last  
 disastrous fight ?'—  
 The surgeon from his casement spoke to him  
 who knocked below.

In hurried words the tale was told ; the  
boon was not denied.

‘Bring round my mule and saddle quick !’  
the surgeon loudly cried.

‘Alvarez, come you with me, lest the house  
I might not know ;  
These rain-squalls blind the eyes at Caravacca.’

About their feet the lightning cracked ;  
above their heads it played.

‘*Señor, Señor, cuidado !*’

The trembling mules could scarce proceed,  
so sore were they dismayed ;

They stumbled on the rugged track ; scant  
foothold there was found.

The track ? was this a pathway ?—nay, a  
rushing river’s bed

O’erflowing with the torrent as its waters  
downward sped ;

From height to height each answering peal  
of thunder echoed round

The sombre hills that quaked o’er Caravacca.

‘Now, by Our Lady’s blessed shrine, this is  
no night to ride,

*Ramón, Ramón Alvarez !*’

His comrade pointed to a cleft within the  
mountain side.

‘There lies my brother’s house,’ said he, and,  
breathless onward led.

One last fierce flash shot splendid through  
the sheet of blinding rain ;

It struck the cross Alvarez wore, and  
shattered it in twain.

‘The sign hath come at last !’ he cried—and  
with that cry fell dead

Before his boyhood’s home by Caravacca.

. . . . .

A woman’s wail rose piercing when the storm  
was spent and o’er—

‘*Ramón, ay ! hijo mio !*’

His mother’s arms were round him, scarce  
a stone’s throw from her door ;

The cross the skies had riven wide shone  
bright upon his breast.

Forth came Carlota wondering — ‘My  
husband sleeps ; be still !’

The mother rose, and pointed to that form  
so stark and chill.

‘He also sleeps,’ she answered, ‘and the  
Saints guard well his rest,

Who met his death for you at Caravacca.’

## The Bell of Bosham

(To Bosham, near Chichester, belongs a legend that a church bell, stolen thence by the Danes, may still on Sundays be heard ringing from the depths of the sea in unison with its fellows on shore.)

‘Ho! sons of the North!’ roared Wulff  
     the Dane  
 To his clamorous Jomsburg crew,  
 ‘We’ve sailed far seas ’neath the flag of  
     Sweyn,  
 But there’s goodly spoil upon yonder plain  
 That spreadeth so fair to view.’

They shipped their oars—so the old tales tell,  
 While rang from the Church tower tall,  
 The Bosham chimes, and they heard right  
     well  
 The rhythmic note of the tenor bell,  
 More clear and more sweet than all.

While ever the breezes seaward bore  
 Its melody rich and deep,  
 Dark scowled the Jarl, and again he swore—  
 ‘Ere a moon hath waned, by the beard of  
     Thor,  
 It shall waken a Viking’s sleep.’

They have reached the shore, they have  
 scaled the tower,  
 They have severed the ropes in twain ;  
 They have seized the bell, while the pale  
 priests cower,  
 ' A grim foretaste of the Northmen's power,'  
 Quoth Wulff, ' till we come again !'

Adown the creek, with the ebbing tide,  
 'Mid laughter, the Danes made speed,  
 But the monks knelt low by the water side,  
 ' Oh good Saint Nicholas,' loud they cried,  
 ' Give ear in our hour of need !'

A cloud hath darkened the distant sky,  
 And shadowed the swelling main ;  
 The storm winds wail, and the waves leap  
 high ;  
 Like wheeling pinions the broad sails fly,  
 Yet shelter they seek in vain.

' What curse lies o'er us ? what Warlock's  
 spell  
 Pursueth our course with fear ?'  
 Out spake the Jarl, ' 'Tis that stolen bell !  
 We must yield it now, lest it sound our knell,  
 Such gift shall the gods hold dear !'

They raised it high while the lightnings pale  
 Smote hauberk and blade and crest ;

They hurled it far o'er their vessel's rail,  
And a silence fell on the swirling gale  
As it sank 'neath the waves to rest.

And still to-day, when the Church chimes  
ring

In cadence o'er land and sea,  
The winds will shoreward an echo bring  
From the sunken bell that the billows swing  
To join in their harmony.

## All Hallowe'en

ROSE and vervain and myrtle,  
With a spray of the jasmine's flower  
She hath twined together to deck her brow,  
And to the turret she hies her now  
As chimeth the midnight hour.

She hath ta'en her seat by the mirror ;  
No charm hath she left untried  
Whereby to summon before her sight  
The image true, on this mystic night,  
Of him who shall claim her bride.

What breath hath parted the arras,  
And flickered the taper's ray ?  
Amid the shadows she shrank in fear,  
While the hollow sound of a step drew near,  
And paused on its stealthy way.

What face hath the glass reflected,  
Seen dim through her clouded hair ?  
Not knight or baron of high degree,  
But a dead man's wraith from the far cold sea  
Hath risen to greet her there !

A shriek that shattered the silence  
Broke forth from her lips in dread—

‘Can no fate sever, and no grave hide !  
I scorned him living, but now,’ she cried,  
‘He cometh to claim me, dead !’

. . . . .

A gay laugh echoed in answer—  
‘No ghost from the sighing main  
Thou seest pass on thy castle stair.  
The sea is strong, but the sea can spare—  
Come forth, unfearing, O maiden fair,  
And welcome me home again !’

## Tarifa

(These lines refer to the celebrated defence of Tarifa against the Moors, 1286. The Spanish commander, Don Alonzo Perez de Guzman, being summoned to surrender the Fortress in exchange for the life of his son, who had been made captive through a love affair with a Moorish lady, indignantly refused the demand, and flung his own sword over the battlements for his son's execution.)

A MOSLEM Chief hath ridden to Tarifa's  
frowning wall,  
Whereon the Spanish knights defied the  
fierce invaders' thrall ;  
    Quoth he, 'The Moorish king  
    A rich reward will bring  
As ransom for this city in the hour that it  
    shall fall.'

Loud laughed Alonzo Guzman, as he scorn-  
ful answer gave—  
'Well may such bribe be proffered, when  
the fight ye will not brave !  
    While one shall yet remain  
    To guard our flag from stain  
The banner of Castile above Tarifa's towers  
    shall wave.'

Again the Moorish messenger the strong-  
hold gate hath sought :

‘ Thus saith my master—if so be thou  
countest wealth as nought,  
Then wilt *thou* tribute pay,  
And he his hand will stay  
Before these walls be shattered, and thy  
pride to dust be brought ? ’

But up rose Don Alonzo, and in blazing  
wrath spake he—

‘ Return to him who sent thee hence, and  
say that victory  
With weight of shameful gold  
Is neither bought nor sold,  
But with men’s blood like wine outpoured,  
ere Spain once more be free ! ’

The dusk to dark had deepened, when from  
out the citadel  
Alonzo’s love-lorn son stole past the  
weary sentinel.

O Zora ! maid most rare,  
Hast wrought a wilful snare ?  
Or was thy beauty guileless, that hath cast  
so strong a spell ?

A third time came the envoy, when the  
dawn was in the sky ;  
With vaunting arrogance he spake—‘ New  
tidings here bring I—

Thy son, proud Spaniard, stands  
 As hostage in our hands ;  
 Now yield for blood if not for gold, or he  
 to-night shall die ! ’

Upon the Spanish host there fell the silence  
 of dismay  
 ‘ Too great,’ they thought, ‘ this price must  
 prove for mortal man to pay ! ’  
 One glance the father cast,  
 Where bound with fetters fast,  
 And shamed amid exultant foes, his son  
 a captive lay.

Then Guzman’s hand his sword-hilt sought  
 —a murmur filled the air :  
 ‘ Woe, woe, that in the stain of such  
 surrender we should share ! ’  
 But scarce that sound was heard  
 Before his answering word  
 Pealed forth in bold defiance like a trumpet’s  
 ringing blare.

‘ Sword of my Sires, I yield thee thus, to  
 other hands than mine ;  
 One last stern service for the land that  
 forged thee, must be thine ! ’  
 Far o’er the fortress wall  
 The steel flashed blue, to fall  
 Amid the blazoned tents that rose to mark  
 the Moslem line.

‘Ye doom my son to shameful death before  
to-morrow’s light,

Wreak ye your will !—My sword awaits ye  
there wherewith to smite.

Learn now, and thus reply—

Nor gold, nor blood, can buy  
The thing that stands though all else fail—  
the honour of a knight.’

The siege was raised ; Alonzo’s king himself  
rides forth to greet

His entry into Alcalà, to grant him honour  
meet,

While by the city gate

Spain’s fairest daughters wait

To crown his helm with laurel, and fling  
flowers before his feet.

His King bestowed the richest lands that  
vine and olive bore

Between the Guadalquivir and the Guadalete’s  
shore.

‘A royal gift !’ he sighed,

‘Yet not yon river’s tide

Shall sweep away my sorrow, nor my son to  
me restore.’

## The Mazard Bowl

(In former times the belief was prevalent in Wales that whoever should quaff the contents of the Mazard Bowl, thereby took on his own soul the sins of the dead man, at whose demise it was prepared.)

‘A STOUN of foaming ale I’ll drain!’ thus  
young Llewellyn cried,

‘And pledge therein the fairest maid that  
dwells by Teify side!’

But as he reined before the inn, with joyful  
comrades three,

The landlord’s daughter in the porch sat  
weeping bitterly.

‘Ah! woe is me! my father’s soul unshriven  
hence hath fled;

Too late the priest shall seek him now; he  
lieth stark and dead!

The world hath deemed him stern and  
harsh, yet unto me alone

His speech held naught but kindness, and  
his anger ne’er was shown.’

From off his steed Llewellyn sprang; in  
gentle tones he spake—

‘Scant favour hath thy father shown to me,  
yet for thy sake

His death I mourn, and fain would strive  
thy sorrow to relieve;

If I in ought could proffer aid, less sorely  
should’st thou grieve.’

She raised her tear-wet eyes to his—‘Nay !  
mock not my despair !

One deed alone may solace me, and that  
will no man dare.

Beside the bier the Mazard Bowl stands  
filled yet still unquaffed.

But ah ! ’twere vain to bid thee drain yon  
dark and potent draught !

‘ With secret rites of grammerie, and spells  
of wizard’s lore

Hath rosemary, vervain, and the juice of  
hellebore

Been mingled there, and whosoe’er his thirst  
therewith shall slake,

The burden of a dead man’s guilt upon his  
soul shall take ! ’

He strode within ; he seized the cup, ‘ I  
sought this morn,’ quoth he

‘ A tankard of thy choicest ale to pledge  
a health to thee,

But now at thy behest this charmed draught  
be mine instead,

So shall thy father rest in peace, his sins be  
on my head ! ’

Full deep drank he ; the empty bowl at last  
he flung aside

‘ Now is my task fulfilled, may I not claim  
reward ? ’ he cried ;

‘Have I not earned one smile from thee?’—  
 but in her eyes there shone  
 No answering light to greet the love that  
 kindled in his own.

With trembling hand she pointed, and across  
 the threshold white,  
 He saw his noontide shadow shrink, and  
 slowly fade from sight,  
 He heard his comrades mount in haste;  
 along the sunlit street  
 Faint grew the throbbing echo of their horses’  
 flying feet.

A bitter cry broke from him. ‘Dost thou  
 also shrink from me,  
 O thankless heart, for thee I sinned, if sin  
 in truth this be!’  
 But dumb in dread she faced him, till with  
 lips grown pale through fear,  
 ‘Depart, accursèd one!’ she cried; ‘thou  
 shalt not linger here!’

‘Farewell,’ he said. ‘Be mine henceforth  
 the burden of this deed.  
 To me alone the way was shown to serve  
 thy direst need.  
 I count the cost of two worlds lost but  
 light if this may win  
 Thy peace in life, his peace in death, whose  
 soul I freed from sin.’

## The Martyr

THEY have loosened the shackles that bound  
him, and lifted the chains from his feet,  
Still striving at last to confound him :—‘O  
fool, is thy stubbornness meet ?

Thou hast fought, but we conquer ; now  
yield thee ; for faith from the flame  
shall not shield thee.’

But the voice of the mob rose around him  
with menace that urged not retreat.

Uprose he with limbs that were leaden,  
though not at that clamour they quailed.  
‘Full deep lie your dungeons to deaden the  
spirit which fain had prevailed ;  
Not now by its breath may be kindled that  
beacon whose glory hath dwindled,  
Grown grey ere yon faggot shall redden—  
the light of a faith that hath failed.

‘Yet, deem ye that thus ye have tamed me  
to shrink from the oath I have sworn,  
And, outcast ’mid serfs who have shamed  
me, to creep through your cities forlorn,  
With eyes that are blinded of vision—a butt  
for your beck and derision,  
O hands that have tortured and maimed me,  
O lips that have laughed me to scorn ?

'The lees of the winecup that flashes lie bitter  
 and black to encrust ;  
 The steel of the sword-blade that slashes  
 may crumble at last into rust ;  
 The drums of the vanguard beat hollow—  
 yet nathless their summons I follow  
 Till flame shall be ended in ashes, and flesh  
 shall descend into dust.

'I list to the tumbril that creaketh ; the skies  
 are unstirred by a breath,  
 But my soul through their silence yet  
 speaketh, and this is the word that it  
 saith,  
 "Though saint and though seraphim spurn  
 thee, this boon thine allegiance shall  
 earn thee,  
 That freedom thy manhood still seeketh—  
 the right to the roadway of death."

'Though I hold but a dream that hath broken,  
 yet greater than truth is its lie ;  
 I turn to your law for a token—yon stake  
 pointeth grim to the sky.  
 For those unto whom He abideth, in scorn  
 of the foe that derideth,  
 By the God I have lost have I spoken, and  
 now as a man let me die.'

Erect and unmoved to surrender he stood  
 in the multitude's sight,

One spear of swift fire shot up slender,—  
then, east of the prison's barred height  
The flame of new day flashed immortal, and  
victor he passed through that portal,  
While death shod his feet with her splendour,  
and dawn crowned his brow with her  
light.

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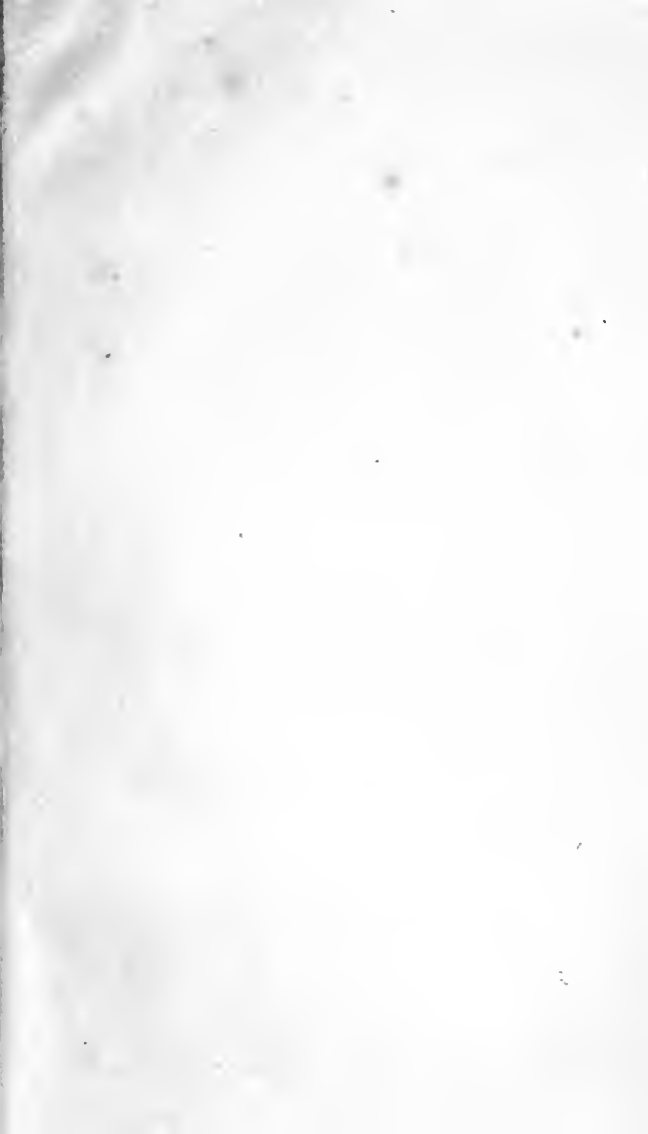
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